

# *An Invitation*

## *Barrington's 2022 Memorial Day Parade*

Hello Neighbors and Friends,

On behalf of the Town of Barrington and the Memorial Day Planning Committee, I would like to invite you to be part of Barrington's vibrant 2022 Memorial Day Commemoration and Parade!

The Town Council recently asked me to take a leading role as Master of Ceremonies, having served as keynote speaker during last year's observance at Town Hall. As a Navy reservist on active duty, veteran of three deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and Barrington resident, I am honored and humbled to accept this role, and I look forward to a deeply meaningful day!

This event has evolved in many ways in the past, and we want to thank the Barrington United Veterans Council for their years of stewardship for such a cherished town tradition. Like so many parts of our lives, COVID put a pause to a full observance of this day - the Memorial Day parade was last held three years ago.

This year the event will come out of hibernation and evolve again, moving more fully from an event run partly "for" the community to one that is entirely run "by" the community, as the Town assumes direct responsibility for this traditional public observance. The Town Manager has named me Chair of the 2022 Memorial Day Planning Committee, which includes several other veterans serving in key roles to plan the day's events.

This year we have an opportunity to re-imagine things and strive for even greater inclusion and participation. This is where we need your help.

We envision a ceremony which has the three parts you may have come to know and love from past Memorial Day events: **a solemn ceremony recalling the departed** at Victory Gate at Barrington High School, followed by **a celebratory parade** from the High School to Town Hall, and capped off by a **formal ceremony** and remarks to the day at Town Hall. We envision a program that represents the core of what veterans have fought for, and that Memorial Day reflect the "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. We also want to take the

time to celebrate some of the many facets of our community that Barrington's own service members sacrificed so much to protect or contributed to upon returning home.

In order to bring renewed thought to each aspect of the celebration, we are asking for your ideas and creativity as we plan for the evolution of the ceremony in ways that best represent the Town. To that end we are taking the traditional sections of the parade, which in 2019 had four "divisions," and changing things a bit. "Military Honor" will now lead the vanguard as division 1, and "Recognition" as division 2, "Civic Pride" as division 3, and "Community" as division 4.

What does this mean in practice? First, we are sending direct letters of invitation to all of the 500-plus veterans registered in town, their families and survivors. We're also including our newest "veterans-to-be" who will graduate BHS this year to attend commissioning programs, service schools or direct enlistment. We'd like as many participants as possible to march with Division 1. As for the other divisions, if you have marched in the parade in the past, we ask that you consider doing so again this year. A place of honor will also be held for our first responders from the Fire and Police Departments and crews from the Department of Public Works.

If you have not marched in the past, we ask that you consider how you or others may play a meaningful role this year. We welcome your ideas. Invitations to march are going out to all the Town's registered civic groups, as well as through the schools to its clubs and organizations.

But you don't have to stop there! If you and your group see yourself as having a place in those divisions, then please stop by Town Hall to pick up a registration form or to get more information.

**Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at Noon is our deadline for responses this year** – and there will be room to evolve further in coming years! Once we have a more complete idea of who can help us re-launch the Memorial Day Observation and Parade this year, we will be in touch with more details. If you have questions, please contact Jean Bellm in the Town Manager's Office: 247-1900 x308, or [jbelle@barrington.ri.gov](mailto:jbelle@barrington.ri.gov).

And for each and every one of you – in the parade or watching from the sidewalk – **please save the date: Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> 2022!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

CDR Frank "Scott" Douglas, USN